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Military Social Work: Utilizing Interprofessional Practice and Education to increase Efficacy

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Military Social Work: Utilizing Interprofessional
Practice and Education to Increase Efficacy

by

Stephanie Grant

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

St. Catherine University | University of Saint Thomas
School of Social Work

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Abstract

This banded dissertation examines the use of interprofessional practice as a framework to increase efficacy in military social work practice and consists of three distinct but related scholarly products. The first scholarly product is a conceptual article that explores the alignment between the Air Force's resilience initiative Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) and the Council on Social Work Education's Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards. Conceptualizing interprofessional practice and the ecological perspective, this article endorses the efforts to advance military social work practice competencies by connecting with CAF and other Department of Defense (DoD) resilience initiatives. Leveraging resources and building upon congruent practices between CAF and the advanced military social work standards can enhance outcomes for military members. Complementary themes between CAF and social work are discussed including recommendations and implications for social work education, research, and practice. The second scholarly product is a qualitative study that examines the collaborative efforts between social work and military professionals through the historical work of the National Committee on Social Work in Defense Mobilization (NCSWDM) from 1950 through 1955. The research question examines the interprofessional themes identified in the NCSWDM record to promote military social work education and practice. The findings suggest that the NCSWDM provided a comprehensive collaborative effort that engaged military and civilian entities to improve social welfare within defense-affected contexts. This study contributes to interprofessional practice literature in military environments and documents the historic work of the NCSWDM, which is absent in the literature. The third scholarly product of this banded dissertation provides an overview of a peer reviewed interactive workshop facilitated on October 20, 2017 at the 63rd Annual Program Meeting for the Council on Social Work

Education. The workshop entitled “Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work” utilized an interprofesssional framework to demonstrate the connection between the values, skills, and perspectives of social work and the Air Force’s Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF). The overview challenged participants to consider how aligning with CAF and other Department of Defense (DoD) resilience initiatives can optimize practice efficacy.

Interprofessional practice and education provide an excellent framework to advance collaboration between military systems and social work. The ecological perspective compliments interprofessional practice endorsing the relationship between reciprocity and improved outcomes for service members. Interprofessional practice advances military social work education and practice as characterized through the historic work of the NCSWDM as well as evidenced through CAF and other resilience initiatives.

Keywords: military social work, Air Force, airman, resilience, comprehensive airman fitness, CAF, council on social work education, interprofessional practice, national association of social workers, national committee on social work in defense mobilization, national social welfare assembly, united community defense services

Dedication/Acknowledgements

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Military Social Work: Utilizing Interprofessional Practice and Education to Increase Efficacy

Providing social work intervention with military populations is complex and requires advanced practice skills. The United States engagement in the longest ongoing conflict has left service members and their families suffering from emotional, psychological, and interpersonal problems (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014). The sheer number of individuals and families affected has created a need for an intentional and multidisciplinary response (Acosta et al., 2014, Bein, 2011; Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Frey, Collins, Pastoor, & Linde, 2014). Research demonstrates that military members are at increased risk and are more likely to experience emotional trauma, but they often resist help (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Nedegaard, 2012, Newell, 2012; Wooten, 2015). The success of efforts to reduce mental health stigma and provide psychological support have mixed results (Acosta et al., 2014; Nedegaard, 2012).

With the recent attention recognizing the value of military social work practice, the historical evidence demonstrates an important aspect of the professions roots in military social work. The CSWE (2010) contends that dating back to 1918, clinical social workers were trained to intervene with soldiers suffering from shell shock from battles in World War I. Early in World War II, the social work profession recognized the “pressing need for clinical services leading to the creation of a military social work specification” (CSWE, 2010, p. 1). There is substantial research that suggests that social workers have been a critical part of the military for decades (Charen, 1946; CSWE, 2010; O’Keefe, 1946; Wickenden, 1955).

The National Committee on Social Work in Defense Mobilization (NCSWDM) operated from 1950 – 1955 provides an example of the historical nature of interdisciplinary efforts between social work and the military. The committee orchestrated a combined effort uniting

several social work organizations and military entities with the goal of increasing the number of military social workers ready to respond to the complex needs of military members. Although the work of the NCSWDM is not well documented in the literature, the committee provides a model for exploring the collaborative efforts to increase efficacy and practice outcomes for service members.

In the field of social work, there is a growing concern for the increased needs represented in military populations. In response to the escalated issues and through the recognition that social work is a healing profession, in 2010, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) published *Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work* standards. The standards provide a disciplinary structure and lens for viewing what is necessary with fostering civilian and government collaboration when caring for the wellbeing of military members, veterans, and families (DuMars et al., 2015). The framework for advanced military social work practice includes risk, resilience, coping strategies, and social support within a military context (CSWE, 2010). All of these concepts provide a framework for understanding the role of social work practice strategies to enhance practice efficacy within military systems.

The military developed resilience initiatives in response to the increase rates of suicide despite comprehensive efforts outlined in the established suicide prevention programs (Meadows et al., 2015). Specifically, the Air Force Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) is a holistic prevention strategy aimed at fostering resilience and coping skills for service members facing escalating stressors and transitions due to the increased operational tempo of the force (Bowen, Jensen, & Martin, 2016; Gonzalez, Singh, Schell, & Weinick, 2014). CAF represents a paradigm shift for the Air Force in addressing mental health stressors and utilizes multiple strategies to

incorporate resilience into everyday operations (AFI, 2014). The foundational principles taught through CAF appear to connect well with social work values, perspectives, and practice skills.

The focus of this dissertation explores the utilization of interprofessional practice to foster resilience and efficacy in military social work. The connection between advanced military social work standards are compared with CAF considering best practice strategies for improved outcomes. The historical record that outlines the work of the NCSWDM is examined considering how the committee mobilized diverse professions to improve efficacy for military clients and defense-affected communities (Newell, 2012; Wickendon, 1955). This dissertation proposes that due to the diverse needs and complexities inherent within military social work, reinforcing collaboration through interprofessional practice will advance support and improve outcomes for military members.

Conceptual Framework

This dissertation utilizes the conceptual framework of interprofessional practice, which recognizes the value of interdisciplinary collaboration to foster client efficacy (Bronsten, 2003; D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Jones & Phillip, 2016; Shannon, 2011). Interprofessional practice advances the tenets of multidisciplinary frameworks and endorses a collaborative interdisciplinary effort with the goal of improving client outcomes (D'Amour & Oandason, 2005). Interprofessional practice was originally developed out of the medical field by practitioners seeking an integrated approach to improve patient outcomes (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005). Interprofessional practice and educational tenets promote relationship-centered learning environments, where knowledge is exchanged and collaboration is valued (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Delunas & Rouse, 2014; Grant & Alexander, 2014). Interprofessional practice establishes a comprehensive collaborative structure among professionals representing diverse

fields responding to common needs or issues (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Irvine, Kerridge, McPhee, & Freeman, 2002).

The concepts of interprofessional practice and education have expanded beyond medical contexts and are embraced by diverse professions that recognize the value of an intentional collaboration to improve client outcomes. In fact, social work education has included interprofessional tenets within the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policies and Standards (CSWE, EPAS 2015). EPAS 2015 embraces the language and framework of interprofessional frameworks by challenging both social work educators and practitioners to become familiar and competent with an interprofessional context in the classroom as well as in the field.

Interprofessional practice provides a valuable model for military social work practitioners seeking to connect with military members. Interprofessional tenets establish a framework for collaboration between diverse military systems. Inherent differences between the social work profession and military culture can be mitigated through interprofessional practice strategies. Therefore, an intentional collaboration between military and social work professionals can espouse a cohesive response to the complex needs evidenced by diverse military environments.

In this dissertation, the ecological perspective serves as a lens to understand the connections between military resilience initiatives and advanced social work practice, as well as the historical collaboration identified through the work of the NCSWDM. The ecological perspective evolved out of science endorsing the interdependent relationship that occurs between individuals and the environment (Brandell, 2011; Gitterman & Germain, 2008). This perspective asserts that individuals and the environment are continually engaging and adapting through a reciprocal relationship (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). As one part of the system becomes the

stronger, the impact is felt throughout the whole system. The ecological framework affirms that building positive capacity within the environment is valuable for individuals and communities (Gitterman & Knight, 2016).

The ecological perspective has applications to understanding the complexity of military contexts. Within the ecological framework, a person is understood within their environment, recognizing the role of context and interplay (Germain, 1991). The ecological lens examines strengths and recognizes various ways individual exhibit resilience in the face of adversity, which is important when considering the experiences of service members and military-affected communities. Moreover, the ecological perspective attends to both social work values and sensitivity to diversity (Forte, 2014). This perspective provides a framework for considering the diverse experiences of service members considering life from their perspective using ecological thinking (Forte, 2014). The ecological perspective compliments interprofessional practice by endorsing strength-based collaborations to promote positive outcomes and practice efficacy (Germain & Gitterman, 2008; Gitterman & Knight, 2016).

Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

The first scholarly product in this dissertation is a conceptual paper entitled “Military Social Work: Utilizing Interprofessional Practice and Education to Increase Efficacy”. The connection and congruency between military resilience initiatives are explored specifically considering the Air Force’s Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) and military social work practice competencies (Air Force, 2014; CSWE, 2008; NASW, 2010). The article articulates how military social workers, utilizing an interprofessional practice framework, can increase practice efficacy by connecting with CAF and other Department of Defense (DoD) resilience initiatives. In the same way, military environments will enhance resilience efforts through the

integration of social workers utilizing their specialized knowledge and experience. An interprofessional collaborative response to the pervasive needs within military environments has substantial implications for advancing social work military standards and contributing to improved outcomes for military members.

The second scholarly product in this dissertation is a qualitative study entitled “How History Informs Social Work Practice: Interprofessional Collaboration in Military Contexts (1950-1955).” This study examines the historical work of the National Committee on Social Work in Defense Mobilization (NCSWDM, 1950-1955). In 1950, at the beginning of a new decade and at the start of the Korean engagement, the United Community Defense Office initiated and financially supported the development of the NCSWDM to address the need for military competent social workers in the field. It was the first collaboration of its kind, bridging the social work field with military establishments. The contributions of the NCSWDM provide a valuable historical example of interprofessional practice that contributes to best practice strategies for social work practice and education responding to military contexts.

The final scholarly product in this dissertation is a summary of a peer-reviewed interactive workshop facilitated at the 63rd Annual Program Meeting for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This workshop entitled “Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work” was given October 20, 2017 and outlines how the Air Force’s Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) is a powerful resource for social workers when promoting client efficacy and leveraging efforts to promote resilience with military members. The workshop encouraged participants to consider how the tenets of CAF are congruent with social work values and perspectives. Participants had the opportunity to engage in thoughtful

discussion about ways that social work professionals can leverage efforts by aligning with CAF and other resilience initiatives to improve outcomes for military members.

Discussion

The findings of this banded dissertation add to the body of work in the areas of interprofessional practice within military social work as exhibited through CAF as well as the historical interdisciplinary work of the NCSWDM. Through an interprofessional practice framework, the work contained within this banded dissertation endorses a cohesive response uniting military and civilians in an effort to deal with the complex needs present within military contexts. As evidenced through the historical work of the NCSWDM as well as present-day efforts to foster resilience among service members, the findings endorse the practice of intentional collaborative efforts to meet the diverse and complex needs of service members.

The first and third scholarly products uncovered the commonalities between the resilience initiative CAF and advanced practice military social work standards. Both CAF and the advanced practice social work standards promote skills and integrative practices based on prevention efforts to foster resilience. Moreover, each attend to research-informed modalities, assessment, and evaluation to establish ongoing best practice strategies. Social workers that connect with CAF and other DoD resilience initiatives can establish a common framework to develop collaborative efforts that foster better outcomes for service members and their families.

In the second scholarly product, the historical account of the NCSWDM contributes to the value of interprofessional practice in the complex arena of military social work. The NCSWDM acted as a central hub engaging military and civilian entities from 1950 through 1955 and they were successful with increasing social work efforts within military environments. The NCSWDM data analysis in this dissertation highlighted the priority the committee placed on

advocacy, recruitment, and interprofessional collaboration, while acknowledging the unique aspects of the agencies represented. Moreover, the data within this research contributes to the body of knowledge related to CSWE history and the establishment of the NASW. The data reflects the long-standing value placed on interdisciplinary practice in military social work and provides historical context about the era when the NASW was founded.

Implications for Social Work Education

In recent years, with the increased need to prepare social workers for military contexts, social work education has developed specialized curricula into social work programs (Savitsky, Illingworth, & DuLaney, 2009). The findings and implications of the studies reviewed in this dissertation demonstrate how establishing social work education programs that prepare students for military contexts and adhering to advanced military practice standards are essential for the social work field moving forward with both efficacy and competency (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Frey, Collins, Pastoor, & Linde, 2014; Selber, Chavkin, & Biggs, 2015; Savitsky, Illingworth, & DuLaney, 2009; Weng et al., 2015; Wooten, 2015).

The CAF model and other DoD resilience initiatives provide a common framework for students in social work education to explore strength-based strategies to foster resilience with military clients. The resilience frameworks are congruent with social work knowledge, values, and skills. Students can explore the connections with CAF and resilience through both casework examples in the classroom as well as military-based internships. Social work educators that teach social work students about the common theoretical and conceptual underpinnings between social work practice and the resilience initiatives will help prepare students for military practice contexts.

The historical work of the NCSWDM provides an excellent model for social work

education. The committee valued intentional collaboration connecting efforts between diverse entities to promote increased social work support for service members. Recognizing the importance of social work education, the NCSWDM was intentional about collaborating with schools of social work to recruit students to the field of social work focusing on defense-affected individuals and communities. The work of the committee provides parallels for modern contexts as well as a strength-based example for students gaining knowledge about interprofessional collaboration that improves outcomes.

Implications for Practice

Social workers have professional expertise and knowledge that is consistent with tenets taught through CAF and other Department of Defense (DoD) resilience initiatives. Therefore, social workers that work with service members can leverage their efforts by connecting with CAF. The CAF example of fostering early help-seeking behaviors with military members and the efforts to mitigate mental health stigma are important components for strength-based social work practice with both military and civilian social workers working with military clients. Social workers that align with CAF can capitalize on the initiative's holistic framework with individuals, families, and military affected communities. Social workers can participate in resilience workshops, deployment reintegration events such as Yellow Ribbon, Wingman Day and other resilience-based efforts all aimed at promoting health and wellness among service members and their families. The commonalities found between CAF and the social work standards provide a tool and interprofessional framework for social workers navigating the inherent complexities within military environments.

Social workers can utilize the interprofessional example provided by the NCSWDM to promote widespread collaboration between civilian and military entities that increase the social

work footprint within military environments. The committee connected professionals from diverse civilian and military networks and were successful in their efforts to establish an increasing number of social workers trained and ready to respond to the needs of military members and their families. The NCSWDM was successful in navigating differences between military and civilian culture remaining steadfast in their efforts to increase the number of social workers trained and ready to respond to the increasing needs of service members. The NCSWDM's historical example provides an excellent example and model for social workers today.

Implications for Future Research

There is increasing literature looking at the unique behavioral health issues related to military and veteran communities as well as literature related to military social work curricula and specialized programs (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Frey et al., 2014; Newell, 2012; Selber et al., 2015; Strong, et al., 2014; Tanielian, et al., 2008; Weng, et al., 2015; Wooten, 2015). Current research related to CAF and other DoD resilience initiatives is limited, especially in relation to how the resilience initiative connects with social work practice. Future studies considering the commonalities between CAF and social work will have implications for advancing social work competency and efficacy.

There is limited literature that outlines the historical work of the NCSWDM and the contributions of their efforts. There is a gap in the literature that examines historical interdisciplinary efforts such as were evidenced through the committee from 1950-1955. This research study contributes to the underdeveloped area of research related to interprofessional collaboration necessary in preparing competent military social workers. It also adds to the limited information available that documents the work of the NCSWDM during its tenure.

Further research examining the early work of the NASW and the CSWE after the committee was disbanded in 1955 would add to our understanding due to the gap in the literature between 1955 and 2000 related to military social work.

In conclusion, this dissertation endorses the value of interprofessional practice through the example of the NCSWDM, as well as the unifying tenets outlined through the CAF and other resilience initiatives. Social work practice in military contexts requires an intentional collaboration between civilian and military efforts with the shared goal of improved outcomes for service members. As the military experiences an increased operational tempo, social workers have the opportunity to take a leadership role uniting military and civilian efforts to address the complex needs. Responding to the consequences of the longest US military engagement requires diligent efforts to navigate differences and seek solutions collaboratively.

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Preparing Military Social Workers for Interprofessional Practice:
Aligning Military Social Work Standards with Comprehensive Airman Fitness

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Abstract

This article conceptualizes interprofessionality through the integration of the Air Force's Resilience Initiative Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) with the Council on Social Work Education's Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards. CAF, a holistic philosophy, is congruent with social work values, perspectives, practice modalities, and skills. Interprofessionality in this context is working collaboratively to build positive capacity and connections across disciplines to promote overall health and resilience of service members and their families. Social workers working within military environments can optimize practice efficacy in military contexts by actively participating with CAF and other established resiliency based initiatives. Reciprocally, the military can enhance resilience efforts by utilizing the knowledge and experience of social workers. Establishing a collaborative response to the pervasive needs of military members that aligns with the established DoD resilience initiatives has substantial implications for fostering advanced military social work practice and improved outcomes for service members.

Keywords: military social work, Air Force, airman, resilience, comprehensive airman fitness, CAF, interprofessional

Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work

In 2014, as a new Air Force Instruction (AFI 90-506) promoting resilience was announced, the Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III stated:

Our job [...] is not an easy task, which is why Comprehensive Airman Fitness is so important. Our focus is on the well-being and care for ourselves, each other, and our families so we can be more resilient to the many challenges military service brings. (Leslie, 2014, p.1)

In this quote, General Welsh emphasizes the need to not only support the military mission but to also find a way to support the wellness and resilience of service members. This goal relates directly to the Air Force's Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) as well as the social work profession engaged in military social work efforts. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) articulates how treatment efforts should strive to promote "health, wellness, and resiliency for service members, veterans, their families, and their communities" (CSWE, 2010, p.3). This CSWE statement indicates some of the intrinsic values and perspectives inherent in the social work profession that also align with the strategic military efforts to foster a resilient force.

The connection between military resilience initiatives and military social work practice competencies is an important bridge for social workers engaging in complex military contexts. This collaboration establishes a common thread between social work and military culture. Social workers endorse holistic strength-based practice strategies, which are the foundation of the military resilience frameworks. The efforts to foster advanced military practice competencies are strengthened when social workers connect with established DoD resilience initiatives and when military systems recognize the value of collaborating with social workers.

The Need for Competent Military Social Work Practice

Over the past decade, the need for competent military social workers has become a focus of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) with the increased operational tempo of the all-volunteer force engaged in the war on terror (CSWE, 2010). With over two million service members deployed since September 11, 2001, there is an alarming number of men and women returning from deployment with various disruptions to their wellbeing, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, depression, traumatic brain injury (TBI), suicide, and family distress (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Nedegaard, 2012). In response to the escalating needs of the military and veteran communities, the CSWE established the Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work standards in 2010 to outline best practice competencies in this complex context.

The CSWE military practice standards align with the competency-based outcomes based on 10 core competencies outlined in the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE, 2008)¹. In these standards, the core competencies are enhanced by practice behaviors and specialized knowledge related to military social work contexts (CSWE, 2008). In 2012, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) developed and published the Military Social Work Practice Standard (Canfield & Weiss, 2015; NASW, 2012). The CSWE and NASW standards provide a disciplinary structure and lens for viewing what is necessary with fostering civilian and government collaboration, while caring for the wellbeing of military members, veterans, and families (DuMars & Oandasan, 2015).

¹ An update is currently in progress that will align the CSWE advanced practice military standards with EPAS 2015.

Leveraging Resources

This conceptual article proposes that the social work profession will strengthen practice competencies and contribute to service member outcomes by aligning with established DoD resilience initiatives that are congruent with social work values and perspectives. The Air Force Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) philosophy and resilience initiative will be compared with military social work practice competencies through the framework of interprofessionality and ecological perspectives. Interprofessionality is defined as a cohesive practice that is developed between professionals from different disciplines with a common goal to improve practice outcomes for clients (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005). In this context, social workers and military communities collaborate with practice strategies that provide an integrated response to needs of the diverse military community.

The ecological perspective provides a lens for understanding the reciprocal exchange that occurs between systems and the influence that the various elements have on service members and families (Germain & Gitterman, 2008). It also explains how social systems and individuals adapt and change according to resources available and the demands of the environment (Brandell, 2011). The ecological framework affirms interprofessionality by recognizing that building positive capacity and connections across disciplines is valuable for overall health and fosters resilience over time (Germain & Gitterman, 2008).

Social workers have recognized the heightened needs of military and veteran communities by creating a framework for a comprehensive and meaningful response to the overarching issues. Therefore, collaborating with established strength-based, holistic resilience military initiatives such as CAF increases the efficacy of social work efforts “as a pivotal healing profession during wartime and in the aftermath” (CSWE, 2010, p. 2). Leveraging resources that

foster resilience attending to cultural sensitivity and to the complexity of needs present in military environments has positive implications for promoting advanced military social work practice standards and building capacity for service member outcomes.

Military Social Work Education

The literature related to military members and veterans validates the importance of social work education adequately preparing students for this diverse practice context. The complex psychosocial issues reported by both service members and veterans demonstrate the need for intervention (Brand & Weiss, 2015). Frey, Collins, Pastoor, and Linde (2014) surveyed licensed social workers who identified common client concerns among military and veteran clients that include mental health, physical health and wellness, social environment, and interpersonal and family needs. The study, although limited in scope, encouraged social work education to continue preparing BSW and MSW students to work with returning service members and their families.

In recent years, with the increased need to prepare social workers for military contexts, social work education has developed specialized curricula into social work programs (Savitsky, Illingworth, & DuLaney, 2009). Selber, Chavkin, and Biggs (2015) examined a collaborative model that trains military social work students. They outline the critical need for social work curricula to develop competent social workers qualified to work with military members or veterans. Weng et al. (2015) examined a program that connects veterans with student social workers and in a qualitative study and demonstrates that collaboration strengthened practice competencies among the students and better prepared them to work with military and veteran clients and families. Wooten (2015) argued for an integrated model of intellectual capital that guides social work education in preparing social workers for responding to the complex needs of

military members and their families.

Brand and Weiss (2015) contend social workers are trained and equipped in assessment, case management, intervention, and cultural competence, which translate well with military-specific practice competencies. The findings and implications of the studies in the review of the literature demonstrates how establishing social work education programs that prepare students for military contexts and adhering to advanced military practice standards are essential for the social work field moving forward with both efficacy and competency (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Frey, Collins, Pastoor, & Linde, 2014; Selber, Chavkin, & Biggs, 2015; Savitsky, Illingworth, & DuLaney, 2009; Weng et al., 2015; Wooten, 2015).

Social Work Practice Perspectives

Social work is a profession that supports individuals, families, groups, and communities with a focus on improving conditions to promote health, wellness, and positive outcomes for all. Recognizing the dignity and worth of each person, social workers seek to build positive capacity and connections for clients by working collaboratively in multi-disciplinary contexts. The various foundational perspectives that social workers utilize to guide practice are analogous with the principles inherent in CAF and other DoD resilience initiatives. The congruency between the theoretical underpinnings of social work and the resilience initiatives demonstrate the value of social workers actively engaged in the process of fostering resilience within military environments.

Ecological Perspective

The ecological perspective emerged from an evolutionary construct recognizing the reciprocal relationship between individuals and the environment (Brandell, 2011). Evolving out of science, the perspective asserts that individuals will make accommodations to ensure a

goodness-of-fit with the environment (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). The goal is to improve the quality of reciprocity between individuals and their environment considering the characteristics of context and culture (Powers, 2010). This concept is directly related to the tenets within both CAF and social work practice competencies. In both constructs, the personal and environmental complexities are addressed through a holistic, strength-based framework to advocate for adaptive strategies that improve capacity of fit. The ecological perspective provides a valuable framework for military social workers using an interprofessional lens to collaborate within complex military environmental systems and to align with resiliency initiatives.

Person-In-Environment and Systems Perspective

Social workers recognize the person-in-environment approach as a foundational lens for viewing how individuals are connected to the environment with reciprocal influences and relationships (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). Similar to the person-in-environment perspective, social workers utilize the systems perspective to consider the context of issues and seek solutions by examining the multiple systems that are involved with the individual or issue. With a systems perspective, social workers view clients on a continuum ranging from micro, mezzo, and macro levels of care recognizing the importance of system boundaries, hierarchy, equilibrium, and mutual causality. In this context, changes that happen in one system will have a rippling effect in the other.

Strengths Perspective and Resilience Focused Approach

Social work embraces a strengths-based approach to all aspects of practice. Instead of focusing on a problem or deficiency, a strengths-based approach considers the individuals established strengths, connections, and abilities. This fosters a network of support focusing on a client's potential and protective factors. A resilience-focused approach evolved out of a social-

ecological framework and is concerned with the ability to persist during times of change and become stronger in the process (Folke, 2006). Focusing on resilience tenets is a paradigm shift from the historical focus on problems or deficits and considers the strengths and abilities within each situation. The resilience framework aligns with the strengths, systems, and person-in-environment approaches by considering the human capacity of individuals to overcome difficult circumstances, the environmental protective factors, and the systemic influences that foster well-being.

Interprofessional Practice Perspective

Interprofessionality is gaining momentum as a cohesive practice between diverse disciplines to achieve goals that are better accomplished collaboratively (Bronstein, 2003; D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Jones & Phillip, 2016; Shannon, 2011). Dating back to the 1970s, the construct of interprofessionality originated in the medical field, seeking to develop an integrated approach among professionals providing patient care (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005). Recognizing the complex needs of health care patients, the coordinated efforts of more than one discipline became a valuable approach to address the issues (Alexandria et al., 2011). The intent of interprofessionality is to exchange knowledge through relationship-centered learning and through fostering a collaborative practice culture (Delunas & Rouse, 2014; Grant & Alexander, 2014). Expanding the tenets of multi-disciplinary methods, interprofessionality provides a cohesive practice among different fields of professionals responding to the same client or issue (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Irvine, Kerridge, McPhee, & Freeman, 2002).

Over the years, the interprofessionality concept has expanded beyond medical contexts and is embraced by diverse professions recognizing the value of intentional collaboration to improve client outcomes. Interprofessionality aligns well with social worker's longstanding

utilization of the person-in-environment perspective, ecological frameworks, the strengths perspective, a resilience-focused approach, and the systems perspective. Interprofessionality provides a valuable model for military social work practitioners seeking to connect with military environments. The complexity of military systems and the inherent differences between the social work profession and military culture can be mitigated through the practice of an interprofessional practice. Therefore, responding within an interprofessional framework, military and social work communities can collaboratively attend to practice strategies that espouse a cohesive response to the complex needs of diverse military environments.

Resilience Efforts in the Air Force

The military's interest in resilience began as a response to high rates of suicide, despite the increased efforts with suicide prevention strategies (Meadows et al., 2015). In 2008, with soldier suicide rates at the highest they had been in 28 years, the Army leadership examined the concept of resilience as a strength-based prevention tool to promote overall health and wellness among the force (Simmons & Yoder, 2013). The Army's Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program was modeled after Martin Seligman's Penn Resiliency Program (Seligman, 2011). Shortly thereafter, the other military branches followed with their own resilience efforts. In 2011, the Air Force developed and launched the Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) initiative as a holistic philosophy to foster resilience in the face of stressors and changing demands with service members and families (Bowen, Jensen, & Martin, 2016; Gonzalez, Singh, Schell, & Weinick, 2014). The Air Force CAF resilience initiative resembles the Army's Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program and utilizes constructs from positive psychology and the Penn Resiliency Program (Seligman, 2011). CAF was launched in response to the pressing needs of service members and their families experiencing recurrent transitions

and stress. CAF is not one single program or training course but is a holistic and a paradigm shift within Air Force culture that weaves resilience strategies into the fabric of everyday operations (AFI, 2014). CAF utilizes a strength-based tiered approach to teach resilience strategies educating airmen about overall fitness (Gonzalez et al., 2014). CAF includes a diverse array of training initiatives, activities, programs, and other strategies all aimed at sustaining a fit force in the four core domains of mental, physical, social, and spiritual health (Bowen, Jensen, & Martin, 2016). The CAF initiative provides a foundational platform that aligns with social work values and practice ethics and is congruent with advanced military social work standards.

Specific Tenets of Comprehensive Airman Fitness

The CAF model is based on the biopsychosocial model of human emotion and incorporates an integrated response using multiple avenues to foster health and wellness among service members (AFI, 2014). This includes peer-to-peer education and training that promotes self-help and self-referral, which equips service members with tools to self-calibrate. The science of positive psychology that underpins the CAF Model is consistent with social work's practice models and perspectives and provides a common framework and continuity in establishing collaborative efforts between social work practice and military contexts. The initiative incorporates holistic strategies that cultivates physical, social, mental, and spiritual fitness (Air Force, 2016).

Some of the key concepts taught through CAF include Seligman's (2011) work, which asserts that optimism is correlated with gratitude. Service members are taught to establish a habit of counting blessings daily and to consistently notice positive aspects of life. Another CAF skill is based on the leading researcher and scientist, Jon Kabat-Zinn's (2016) work with mindfulness. Service members are guided through mindfulness strategies learning that maintaining focus helps

disengage negative thoughts that interfere with goals and performance (AF, 2016).

Lyubomirsky's (2008) concepts are taught, which assert that values are the internal compass that should drive establishing and accomplishing goals. Service members are instructed about the tenets of Hayes' (2004) acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). This therapy model asserts that psychological suffering is often caused by avoidance. However, choosing to be present and respond according to personal values decreases negative experiences as well as promotes cognitive fusion (AF, 2016; Hayes, 2004). Moreover, focusing on personal strengths is associated with positive outcomes, greater psychological well-being, less stress, and lower depression (AF, 2016; Seligman, 2011).

The four key resilience factors established within the CAF model include individual, family, unit, and community systems (Meredith et al., 2012). The factors align well with social work's foundational ecological systems perspective that encompasses micro, mezzo, and macro frameworks to understand systems of care. The CAF concepts align with the CSWE advanced practice standards as well as social work practice models; and so, provide a valuable foundation to establish competent practice frameworks in military environments.

Air Force Resilience Research

Research examining CAF is limited; however, Bowen, Jensen, and Martin (2016) examined the efficacy of CAF using the Support and Resilience Inventory to study measures of mental fitness, physical fitness, social fitness, and spiritual fitness. The research study considered the construct validation and invariance of CAF examining the online assessment tool focused on biopsychosocial and spiritual fitness measures. They found that the tool was invariant across the various service components, and a positive association between resilience and total fitness. Bowen et al. (2016) concluded that the tenets of CAF can be "conceptualized as a total fitness

construct” within the Air Force (p. 7). The research provides valuable information related to CAF and points to the importance of ongoing evaluation and assessment as the resilience initiative continues.

Meadows et al. (2015) as part of the RAND Project Air Force conducted research aimed at providing the Air Force with the most recent and relevant information available to establish best practice standards that promote service member and family resilience. The study outlined several themes addressing resilience factors. The researchers concluded that resilience is understood through the context of stress or change. It is a dynamic process and not limited to specific behaviors or traits. Moreover, resilience can be developed and learned, as individuals do not have a limited set of resilience factors or abilities. The researchers identified that resilience traits encompass personality, biology/physiology, behaviors, and available resources. The themes identified by RAND are congruent with the CAF practice tenets and strategies. The literature related to CAF affirms the value of leveraging resources and building upon congruent practices between the resilience initiatives and advanced military social work standards.

Discussion

Complementary Themes Between Comprehensive Airman Fitness and Social Work

Several themes emerge when examining the Air Force’s CAF resilience initiative, the CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work standards, and the profession of social work values and practice perspectives. The following sections will develop the unifying themes and the strong correlation between CAF, the Military Social Work standards, and the social work profession. The theoretical frameworks of interprofessionality and the ecological perspective will be considered as well as relevance for social work practice and social work education.

Holistic practice focused on prevention. CAF is a cultural shift on how to view and maintain overall fitness in a holistic and comprehensive manner considering the complexity of needs apparent in modern military environments (AFI, 2014; Bowen, Jensen, & Martin, 2016; Wooten, 2015). The overarching approach seeks to build and sustain resilient attributes throughout military environments. The CAF model recognizes that the dimensional aspect of the whole person is divided into mental, physical, social, and spiritual domains (AFI, 2014). Both the CAF and the CSWE advanced practice standards align with the person-in-environment and holistic practice perspectives considering reciprocity and the transactional nature of individuals within community frameworks.

The CSWE advanced practice standards establish the treatment goals in military contexts that promote wellness, health, and resilience for all individuals, which include service members, veterans, families, and the communities where they reside (CSWE, 2010). This includes assessing military member's resilient traits and their ability to adapt to transitions and stressors within the environment. The standards outline the importance of considering the individual within their environment and engaging in holistic, preventative practice strategies (CSWE, 2010). Aligning with common tenets such as prevention helps to address the complex nature of military social work as a specialized field of practice with high personal demands (Wooten, 2015).

The CAF initiative promotes early help-seeking behaviors and mitigates mental health stigma by educating that resilience is about regulating and expressing emotions appropriately. The model teaches that a service member must rely on self and others, as well as understand that a resilient lifestyle can be developed and is a continuous process (AFI, 2014). This has significant application to social work practice within military contexts. Social workers can build

upon this holistic framework by networking at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. There are small group resilience workshops, Yellow Ribbon events, Wingman Day, and other ways to participate and connect with the resilience efforts through CAF. Social workers can leverage efforts through connecting and collaborating with commanders and airmen that direct the resilience efforts at the wing. Social workers have professional knowledge and expertise regarding many of the CAF tenets through education and training, therefore aligning with the resilience framework is a natural fit and practice strategy.

Social work education should provide instruction about the various resilience military initiatives such as CAF. The resilience frameworks conceptually align with social work values, perspectives, knowledge, and skills. Social work students can engage and connect with CAF through both casework examples within the classroom and through military-based internships. The practice opportunities provide a valuable way to prepare and engage competent military social work professionals in military resilience strategies upon graduation.

Resilience and strength-based skills. The CAF model is a strength-based approach that emphasizes how healthy individuals and communities live out a balanced, healthy lifestyle. Through educational workshops, CAF promotes overall fitness and performance by teaching adaptive skills (AFI, 2014; Bowen, Jensen, & Martin, 2016; Gonzalez, Singh, Schell, & Weinick, 2014). CAF promotes foundational life skills and competencies through the various resilience training and education strategies that meet the needs of service members (AFI, 2014; Bowen, Jensen & Martin; 2016). The foundational aspects of the strengths perspective and resilience initiatives within CAF and military social work establish an interprofessional alignment for practice.

The CSWE advanced practice standards engage diversity and difference in practice that

recognize the risk and the protective factors among diverse military populations. The standards outline the importance of a social worker's responsibility to promote client self-efficacy and empowerment by valuing client's strengths, cultural norms, and resilient traits (CSWE, 2010). Social workers within the profession are trained to recognize and value strengths with individuals, families, communities, and the environment (Newell, 2012). The alignment of CAF and the Advanced Practice standards focus on strengths and resilience provides a cohesive foundation for military social workers.

Military social workers can increase practice efficacy by engaging with various policies, strategies, and components incorporated within resilience initiatives such as CAF. Aligning with CAF allows social worker's efforts to capitalize on client strengths and adhere to the shared social work ideal of starting where the client is. This includes identifying the specific tenets, language, contexts with CAF, and develop shared practice opportunities. This knowledge and active collaborative practice will help develop effective tenets of interprofessionality that cultivate interdisciplinary areas of strength. There are resilience-focused military personnel at each wing as well as the state and national level. Social workers that connect with the military resilience efforts will increase practice competence and promote health and wellness efforts with military members, their families, and the community.

Wooten (2015) outlined the value of social work education, preparing students in both resilience and strength-based approaches and how that will have a direct impact on services provided to military members, their families, and their communities. The resilience practice modalities provide a common language and framework for social work students to build upon. Social work education often utilizes a generalist social work practice framework, which prepares social work students to work with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities (Brand &

Weiss, 2015). Through this holistic lens, social work students are taught the person-in-environment perspective, which views an individual as part of a larger system. Moreover, social work education charges faculty and students to engage in strength-based practices that foster client well-being and resilience (Brand & Weiss, 2015; CSWE, 2010; Forgey & Young, 2014; Nedegaard, 2012). Therefore, CAF and other resilience initiatives provide an excellent framework for social work education that fosters advanced practice strategies.

Critical thinking skills. The CAF model equips service members and their families with necessary skills and tools that enable them to evaluate and adjust to maintain balance with complex environmental demands. Service members that maintain balance with cognitive skills, emotional stamina, physical endurance, and spiritual well-being are inclined to exhibit the core values of the Air Force which are “integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do” (AF, 1996, p. 1). Individuals serving in the Air Force are tasked to continually monitor balance in a complex, dynamic environment. This critical thinking process promotes a continued evaluation of wellness within the four domains of physical, mental, social, and spiritual health (Bowen, Jensen, & Martin, 2016).

The social work profession affirms critical thinking as a foundational practice and value within diverse practice contexts. The CSWE advanced practice standards articulate the importance of utilizing critical thinking that informs and communicates information in a professional manner responding to changing demands within complex systems (CSWE, 2014). A military social worker is tasked with analyzing the appropriate assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation models to utilize with service members, their families, and their communities (Wooten, 2015). When social workers value and attend to critical thinking strategies within practice, it models the skill for military clients and fosters multidisciplinary

practice strategies congruent with interprofessionality and ecological frameworks.

In social work education, the CAF tenets provide a common framework to foster critical thinking skills and practical application of casework in military contexts. The resilience initiatives align with the competencies reflected within the CSWE advanced military practice standards. CAF and other resilience initiatives equip students to utilize critical thinking in advanced practice military contexts. Educating military social work students about the specific aspects of the resilience frameworks, as well as the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings will advance practice efficacy.

Integrated framework. The CAF initiative provides an integrated structure that is comprised of many cross-functional training and education efforts, programs, and activities that promote and foster a healthy, resilient, and ready force (AFI, 2014). The efforts to promote resilience encompass strategies working with individuals, families, groups, and community systems (Bowen, Jensen & Martin, 2016). The CSWE advanced practice standards apply social work principles to guide professional practice that are congruent with the CAF tenets and principles. The standards outline the importance of service delivery at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels attending to the military's cultural emphasis on mission readiness, support of service, honor, and cohesion (CSWE, 2010).

The integrated framework in CAF and the CSWE advanced practice standards reflect social worker's person-in-environment perspective, which recognizes that individuals must be understood within a broader context. Competent military social workers possess an awareness of the unique challenges inherent within military contexts and recognize the integrated relationships in military culture. Military social workers that value reciprocity, as well as the contributions of others, practice within an ecological and interprofessional framework. The holistic framework of

CAF aligns well with social worker's integrated system approach. Social work educators should provide students with both information and practice experience working with CAF and other resilience frameworks preparing them for future competent practice. Through an integrated practice model, various systems are recognized, valued, and viewed as integral parts of a whole system of care.

Research-informed practice, assessment, and evaluation. The CAF initiative is an evidence-based practice model that is assessed and evaluated through both military and civilian contracted entities (AFI, 2014; Meadows et al., 2015). The CAF framework utilizes research-informed practice strategies considering unique lifestyle challenges within military environments (AFI, 2014; Seligman, 2011). The CAF initiative provides tools for leaders to create and sustain comprehensive fitness and optimizes performance at work, home, and in the community (Meadows et al., 2015). The CAF practice strategies are congruent to social work best practice models and provide a shared foundation for collaboration.

The CSWE advanced practice standards advocates for research-informed practice that sustains ongoing analysis of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation models utilized in military social work contexts (CSWE, 2010). The CSWE advanced practice standards assert that modalities should be consistent with multisystem approaches congruent with the diversity of systems inherent within military environments (CSWE, 2010). The attention to research informed practice models and evaluation is consistent with both the CAF model and the CSWE advanced practice standards. It also aligns with social worker's value of evidence-based practice, ongoing assessment, and evaluation strategies. Social workers working within military environments can optimize their connection with research informed models appropriate in military contexts by actively participating with CAF and other established resiliency based

initiatives.

Social work education should engage in practice, evaluation, and research of the military resilience initiatives such as CAF. Educating and providing practical learning opportunities for social work students about the resilience evidence-based practice strategies will establish a ready social work force, prepared to provide competent practice in various military capacities. Current research related to CAF and other resilience initiatives is limited. Future research and evaluation efforts will provide valuable information and have implications for advancing military social standards.

Conclusion

Social work practice with military communities is inherently diverse and complex. Social workers are astute at working within complicated contexts and focusing on strengths and areas of commonality to build collaborative working relationships. Resilience initiatives are aligned with social work professional values and standards; therefore, connecting with the various integrated resilience strategies in CAF is a natural response and provides a congruent foundation. The CAF model is rooted in well-established modalities and theories such as positive psychology, acceptance and commitment therapy, and the ecological and strengths perspectives, to name a few (AF, 2016). CAF and other DoD resilience initiatives provide a common platform to bridge efforts through collaboration and interprofessional frameworks. The resilience approaches within the DoD, the CSWE advanced practice military social work standards, and social work education are compatible and complementary. Each endorses strength-based strategies based on empowerment, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. Moreover, they address the diversity and multifarious complexities implicit within military contexts.

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How History Informs Social Work Practice:
Interprofessional Collaboration in Military Contexts (1950 – 1955)

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Abstract

This article is a qualitative study that examines the collaborative efforts between social work and military professionals through the historical work of the National Committee on Social Work in Defense Mobilization (NCSWDM, 1950-1955). The development of the NCSWDM in 1950 was the first collaboration of its kind bridging the social work field with military establishments to increase the number of social workers in the field at a time of severe shortages and increased needs in defense-affected communities. The research examines the themes identified in the NCSWDM record that foster military advanced practice standards for social work practice and education. The themes were analyzed using a thematic content analysis applying grounded theory principles and techniques. The findings suggest that the NCSWDM facilitated a robust collaboration engaging military and civilian entities to improve social welfare within defense affected environments. Moreover, the NCSWM provided a valuable historical example of interprofessional practice that informs military social work. Interprofessional practice in this context is increasing the footprint of social workers in military affected contexts to improve outcomes for service members and their families. This study contributes to the underdeveloped area of research related to interprofessional practice with military social workers and outlines the limited information available that documents the historic work of the NCSWDM during its tenure.

Keywords: military social work, national committee on social work in defense mobilization, council on social work education, national association of social workers, united community defense services, national social welfare assembly, interprofessional practice

How History Informs Social Work Practice: Interprofessional Collaboration in Military Contexts

Introduction

Military engagements since September 11, 2001 comprise the longest continuous combat efforts in United States history and have escalated the need for competent social workers in military contexts (Brand & Weiss, 2015; CSWE, 2010; Strong et al., 2014; Wooten, 2015). The sheer number of individuals and families affected by the September 11th attacks has created a need for an intentional and collaborative response from the social work field at every level (Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Hosek, Kavanagh & Miller, 2008; Nedegaard, 2012). Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, depression, traumatic brain injury (TBI), suicide, and problems within the family have created an urgent need for social workers competent in military environments (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Nedegaard, 2012; Tanielian et al., 2008). Without support and left untreated, military members and veterans suffer high rates of substance use, marital problems, unemployment, homelessness, chronic mental health problems, and suicide (American Psychological Association, 2016; Brand & Weiss, 2015; Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Newell, 2012).

Efforts to meet the needs of military affected individuals, families, and communities are not a new phenomenon for social workers. For decades, social workers have recognized the value of bringing professional stakeholders together from various fields. This is important in bridging areas of knowledge and expertise to achieve better outcomes for clients (Charen, 1946; Newell, 2012; Wickendon, 1955; Wooten, 2015; Young, 1946). In 1950, during the beginning of the Korean War, the American Association of Group Workers, the National Association of School Social Workers, the American Association of Medical Social Workers, the American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, and the American Association of Social Workers

initiated the development of the National Committee on Social Work in Defense Mobilization (NCSWDM). The NCSWDM addressed the complex needs in defense-affected communities by bridging the social work field with military establishments (Wickenden, 1955). The NCSWDM included 14 national organizations and agencies and was funded by the United Community Defense Services, Inc. with the goal of increasing the number of professional social workers able to provide comprehensive social work services and resources to military members, veterans, and their families (NCSWDM, 1953).

The NCSWDM provides a rich history of interdisciplinary collaboration that appears to be absent in literature related to military social work. With the recent focus and need to establish competent social work practice in collaboration with military and civilian organizations, this qualitative study examines the archival record of the NCSWDM during its tenure and considers the implications and relevance for the social work field. Utilizing the framework and lens of interprofessional practice, this study considers the relationship, contributions, and efficacy of the NCSWDM's multidisciplinary efforts and posits that the NCSWDM is a valuable historical example of an interprofessional framework that informs current military social work practice. The construct of interprofessional practice extends beyond the tenets of multidisciplinary frameworks to include the reciprocity of practice efforts between diverse professions with the goal of improved client outcomes (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005).

Literature Review

The Complex Needs of Military Affected Communities

For nearly two decades, the military engagements Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) have created a new era in the history of the country's all-volunteer force (APA, 2016; Brand & Weiss, 2015; Canfield &

Weiss, 2015; Nedegaard, 2012; Wooten, 2015). Deployments are lasting for longer periods and redeployment is common with limited breaks in between (Frey, Collins, Pastoor & Linde, 2014; Hosek, Kavanagh, & Miller, 2008). Military members are exhibiting emotional, psychological, and interpersonal problems that are evident in communities in escalating numbers (Wooten, 2015).

Number of military and veterans affected. With the over two million service members deployed since OIF began, it is estimated that approximately 26% of those returning are experiencing significant issues (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Nedegaard, 2012). The high rate of PTSD and TBI among post deployment service members has encouraged scholars to consider them as the “signature wounds” of OIF and OEF (Tanielia et al., 2008). It is estimated that approximately 300,000 individuals suffer from PTSD or major depression and approximately 320,000 individuals may suffer from a deployment related TBI (Tanielia et al., 2008). Some research estimates that about one-third of previously deployed individuals report some symptomology of PTSD, depression, and TBI (Brand & Weiss, 2015; Nedegaard, 2012).

Barriers to seek treatment. Military populations represent a diverse community with active duty members, reservists, national guardsmen, civilian workers, and military family members (Acosta et al, 2014). Recent studies indicate that reserve and guard units are at an increased risk of mental health issues, including suicide and suicide ideation, as they are deploying more often and have less support as they reintegrate back into civilian life (Kehle et al., 2010; Tanielian et al., 2008; Wooten, 2015). Studies have examined issues related to stigma and barriers to early help-seeking behaviors within both military and veteran populations (Kehle et al., 2010; Quartana et al., 2014). Recent literature uncovers fear as a barrier in both recognizing emotional issues and in seeking treatment (Acosta et al., 2014; Bein, 2011; Jones et.

al, 2013; Kehle et al., 2010; Salzer, 2014; Valenstein et al., 2014). Embedded in the culture is a belief system that it is risky to seek help for emotional issues (Bein, 2011). The culture to support a collective mission may cause service members to feel afraid that admitting a problem equates to letting down the team and the mission (Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Frey, Collins, Pastoor, & Linde, 2014; Michalopoulou, Welsh, Perkins & Ormsby, 2016).

Advancing Competent Military Social Work Practice

In 2010, the CSWE prepared a policy entitled, “Advance Social Work Practice in Military Social Work” and in 2012, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) published “Military Social Work Practice Standards” to guide the social work field in developing competent military social work practitioners (CSWE, 2010; NASW, 2012). Wooten (2015) contends that schools of social work and the social work profession itself provide excellent opportunities for preparing and educating culturally competent social workers to respond to the critical need of coordinating services for military members and veterans.

Military social work research. Forgey and Young (2014) report there is limited empirical research about what social workers know about military social work, including education and training efforts to prepare them to work with military populations. Over the past several years, studies have started to emerge examining the efficacy of military social work education and military social work practice (APA, 2016; Brand & Weiss, 2015; Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Frey et al., 2014; Hosek, Kavanah & Miller, 2008; Newell, 2012; Savitsky et al., 2009; Selber et al., 2015; Strong et al., 2014; Tanielian et al., 2008; Weng, et al., 2015; Wooten, 2015).

The History of Military Social Work

With the recent attention recognizing the value of military social work, literature shows

that this is not a new phenomenon. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2010) contends that dating back to 1918, clinical social workers were trained to intervene with soldiers suffering from shell shock from battles in World War I. Early in World War II, the social work profession recognized the pressing need for clinical services, leading to the creation of a military social work specification (CSWE, 2010; Okeefe, 1946; Segal, 1945). There is substantial research that suggests social workers have been a critical part of the military for decades (Charen, 1946; CSWE, 2010; Okeefe, 1946; Segal, 1945; Young, 1946).

Brand and Weiss (2015) report that psychiatric social work was valued and recognized by the Army as a vital occupation specialty as far back as 1943. Historically, research dating back to the 1940s suggests the important role of social work within every branch of the military system (Young, 1946). Segal (1945) claimed that a tremendous amount of work was accomplished for the recognition of professional social workers within the armed forces. O'Keefe (1946) asserted that social work has become an important field due to valuable treatment contributions with men in military service. During this time, in recognition of the valuable role, the military placed social workers on a critically needed and scarce specialist list (Charen, 1946).

The development of the National Committee on Social Work in Defense Mobilization (NCSWDM) in 1950 was the first collaboration of its kind, bridging the social work field with military establishments. Along with the five organizations that made up the NCSWDM, there were representatives participating from the National Social Welfare Assembly and the Council on Social Work Education, which was previously called the American Association of Schools of Social Work (Wickenden, 1955). The NCSWDM was primarily concerned with ensuring that social workers were trained and readily available to assist communities affected by national defense efforts (NCSWDM, 1953).

The historical tensions. When considering the history of military social work, it is important to address the inherent strains between the two fields that were apparent throughout the years. Aside from early literature before the 1950s and recent literature focusing on military social work contexts, there is limited literature in the years between. The following two articles provide insight into conflicts articulated by the social work field in relation to military environments. The examples are not meant to be exhaustive but rather provide a sample of tensions expressed over the years. Brown (1984), a social work practitioner working with Vietnam veterans, outlines clinical practice strategies with consideration to posttraumatic stress symptoms as a delayed response to the stressors of war. In the article, Brown challenges social workers to continually self-assess for bias or stereotyping and generalizations. Moreover, Brown (1984) contends that the social work field must “open its own system to meet the needs of the Vietnam veteran and his family” (p. 378). This recommendation suggests that the field was not inherently open to military social work contexts at the time.

Verschelden (1993) wrote an article in the journal of *Social Work* entitled *Social Work Values and Pacifism: Opposition to War as a Professional Responsibility*. Verschelden contends that the NASW *Code of Ethics* and core values of the profession are opposed to war. The article explains that social justice is a foundational issue for social work with a focus on the importance of the individual, respect and appreciation for difference, and a commitment to the well-being of all in society. Verschelden (1993) challenges social workers to stand against policies and legislation that promote war by drawing on the courage from the esteemed social work pioneer, Jane Addams, “who was against war and believed it created more problems than it solved” (p. 765). The CSWE (2010), *Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work* guidelines address the strains between the military and social work values directly, by stating that providing

competent social work practice and research related practice to the military does not “endorse war or aggression, but rather extends meaningful help to those who have been affected” (p. 2).

The guidelines challenge social workers in the profession to get involved in promoting the education and practice of competent military social work with recognition that social work is at the core, a healing profession. Moreover, social workers have the opportunity to have a profound influence as professionals and take on a leadership role in social work education, practice, and research promoting efficacy in military social work contexts. The challenge by social work leaders to promote competent practice and research for military social work, regardless of value differences, contributes to the increase in literature related to military social work in recent years.

The Conceptual Lens of Interprofessional Practice

Interprofessional practice provides a framework for social workers working alongside diverse professional teams to address best practices for military members and their families (D’Amour & Oandasan, 2005). The underpinning premise of interprofessional practice contends that multidisciplinary teams exchange knowledge and foster a collaborative practice culture to improve practice efficacy (D’Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Delunas & Rouse, 2014; Grant & Alexander, 2014). Responding within an interprofessional framework, military and social work communities can collaboratively attend to practice strategies that espouse a cohesive response to the needs of diverse military environments. The complexity of military systems and the inherent differences between the social work profession and military culture can be mitigated through interprofessional practice strategies. The work of the NCSWDM provides a historical interprofessional practice example and a lens to consider current social work practice efficacy with military environments.

Potential Contributions of this Study

There is increasing amounts of literature looking at the unique behavioral health issues related to military and veteran communities as well as literature related to military social work curricula and specialized programs (APA, 2016; Brand & Weiss, 2015; Canfield & Weiss, 2015; Forgey & Young, 2014; Frey et al., 2014; Hosek, Kavanah & Miller, 2008; Newell, 2012; Savitsky et al., 2009; Selber et al., 2015; Strong et al., 2014; Tanielian et al., 2008; Weng et al., 2015; Wooten, 2015). There exists a limited amount of literature outlining the historical work of the National Committee on Social Work Defense Mobilization and the contributions of their efforts. There is also a gap in literature that examines historical interdisciplinary efforts such as were evidenced through the committee from 1950-1955. This research study contributes to the underdeveloped area of research related to interprofessional collaboration necessary in preparing competent military social workers. It also adds to the limited information available that documents the work of the NCSWDM during its tenure.

Method

This study utilized a historical content analysis design using exploratory qualitative methods to examine the collaborative efforts between social work and military professionals that foster social work practice in military contexts. In the past 15 years, there has been a common understanding of the complexities involved with establishing competent social work practice in collaboration with military and civilian organizations. Therefore, there is value in examining the historical role of the NCSWDM during its tenure and to consider the implications and relevance for social workers moving forward in competent military practice.

This study proceeds from the belief that the NCSWDM is a valuable historical example of interprofessionality that informs current military social work practice. The record was

examined using the following qualitative questions to explore themes and processes:

RQ1. What themes are identified in the record of the interprofessional collaboration of the NCSWDM committee seeking to promote military social work?

RQ2. What is the relative strength of the themes identified?

Sample

Qualitative data were collected by analyzing 105 primary source documents from the records of the NCSWDM in the Social Welfare History Archives (SWHA), Elmer Anderson Library at the University of Minnesota. The records are comprised of the following:

- SWHA data of NCSWDM organizational papers which includes folders 1375 through 1405
- SWHA data that documents liaison activities between the social welfare profession and various public and private agencies and organizations related to the national defense effort which includes folders 1406 through 1419
- SWHA data about the NCSWDM's service to individuals which includes folders 1420 through 1426
- SWHA data that shows the relationship of NCSWDM with the United Community Defense Services, which includes folders 1427 through 1430.

The records include letters, meeting minutes, policy statements, and memorandums initiated by the NCSWDM, or written to the NCSWDM from interdisciplinary agencies and organizations.

Analytic Methods

The themes identified in the record were analyzed using a thematic content analysis (Coffee & Atkinson, 1996) applying grounded theory principles and techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) to identify recurring themes and their prevalence in the record. Grounded theory

methods utilize a theory-building approach that looks for ongoing themes and issues present in the record. The themes were grouped into categories that explain the common issues or salient themes within the data. The content analysis method provides information regarding how much of the data is connected to each of the identified categories.

Data Collection and Procedures

For data collection, the documents were reviewed at least three times to ascertain relevance to the author's research topic. To reduce author bias and strengthen internal validity of the study, documents chosen from the NCSWDM boxes were taken from multiple internal and external data sets. The data is comprised of unpublished primary sources drawn from the 1950-1955 from individuals and organizations that were reliable and actively working with or for the NCSWDM to develop social work structure in defense-affected communities. This study applied a three-step approach as outlined by Padgett (2017) to increase the reliability of the data. The primary source documents were first read using an inductive method of open coding, applying grounded theory principles to explore themes. The coding process initially identified themes in sentences and paragraphs with the goal of documenting categories of themes (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017).

The categorical themes that emerged through this process include social work education and recruitment, advocacy with selective service, interprofessional collaboration between military and civilian entities, inherent strains between civilian and military structures, and the succession plan of the NCSWDM to the NASW and the CSWE. These themes were then utilized to deductively analyze the record applying a qualitative content analysis to explore the nature and degree the themes were found in the record. Finally, the record was analyzed a third time using an inductive method of open coding to look for missing themes data that may have been

missed during the first two readings.

Study Strengths and Limitations

The study of history provides information and perspectives from the past that can help inform the present and contribute to future contexts. The three-tier analysis provided a thorough assessment of the data. The number of records assessed strengthened the reliability of analysis. However, there are limitations considering not all the perspectives from the archive material could be represented in this study. Moreover, historical data was subject to personal ideological constructs and interpretation of the researcher (Andrews, 2001). The historical relevance of the data is subject to change in relation to new perspectives, knowledge, and scholarship.

Findings

The NCSWDM concentrated on a number of issues during its five-year stint. Particularly, the NCSWDM was concerned with the role of social work in national defense in both military and civilian spheres. The committee described their purpose as an “Emergency committee established by five professional social work membership organizations in 1950 to promote a maximum concentration of social work services in the defense period” (NCSWDM, 1955, p. 1). The five professional social work organizations that established the committee recognized the wide range of differences between communities in relation to the need for social workers and social work services (NCSWDM, 1955). The committee’s top goals were developing social welfare services in areas where they were greatly needed, as well as recruiting for the social work profession (NCSWDM, 1953). Table 1 summarizes the analysis of categorical themes identified through the data.

Table 1

Categorical Themes Identified in the Records.

Categorical Theme	Number	Percentage
Social Work Education and Recruitment	182	29
Advocacy with Selective Service	118	18
Interprofessional Collaboration	145	23
Addressing the Inherent Strains	105	16
NCSWDM Succession Plan	89	14

The analysis describes the number of instances and percentage in which the data alluded to the coded categorical theme. In total, the analysis identified 639 instances a categorical theme that were identified through the inductive analysis. As the table suggests, social work education and recruitment accounted for 29% of the coded categorical themes (182 of 639), advocacy with selective services represented only 18% of the coded categorical themes (118 of 639), interprofessional collaboration accounted for 23% of the coded categorical themes (145 of 639), addressing the inherent strains represented 16% of the coded categorical themes (105 of 639), and succession of the NCSWDM accounted for 14% of the coded categorical themes (89 of 639). The categories speak to the depth and scope of collaboration that existed between the various entities connected to the NCSWDM.

Social Work Education and Recruitment

The major focus of the NCSWDM was to recruit social workers into the profession specifically to work with military and military affected populations at the time of a severe shortage (NCSWDM, 1952; UCDS, 1955). The NCSWDM members were motivated by the belief that the social work profession was responsible for providing knowledge, skills, and expertise to military and civilian communities (NCSWDM, 1955). Table 2 presents the most common education and recruitment themes represented in the data.

Table 2

Codes for the Most Common Themes to Education and Recruitment.

Coded Theme	Number	Percentage
Social Work Career Recruitment	96	53
Social Work Education	41	23
Collaboration	45	24

The number column indicates the number of times the coded theme is represented in the data and each percentage outlines the amount of data connected to that theme. The data emphasizes priority placed on social work recruitment, education, and collaboration.

The NCSWDM was established during a time when the Army and the Air Force had an urgent need for qualified social workers (NCSWDM, 1952). In fact, the committee outlined the shortage of medical social workers nationwide. They contended, “There are at present a minimum of 4500 psychiatric social workers [...] 257 unfilled jobs requiring psychiatric social workers in national agencies [...] and it is estimated that within five years, 9860 additional social workers will be needed” (NCSWDM, 1952, p. 2). The committee’s 1953 NCSWDM statement of purpose prioritized the recruitment and development of social workers for the profession due to the escalating need in areas affected by defense efforts. The statement of purpose explained, “Trained social workers are needed to help people [...] survey and understand the social problems emerging, to help militate resources for dealing with them, and to give leadership in establishing and carrying forward necessary programs and services” (NCSWDM, 1953, p. 1). Prior to the work of the NCSWDM there was not a central source to deal directly with the shortage of social workers in defense-affected communities (NCSWDM, 1955). The NCSWDM championed the message that a national recruitment program for the field of social work was essential (NCSWDM 1953; NCSWDM, 1955).

The NCSWDM worked closely with schools of social work educating them about the need for social workers in defense-affected areas as well as “acting as a clearing house for schools of social work in relation to the Armed Services” (NCSWDM, 1953, p. 1). The committee advocated for deferment with the Selective Service in order for social work students to complete their education prior to serving (NCSWDM, 1952). The collaboration between schools of social work and the Selective Service was successful in effecting change in policy and practice to create opportunities for military social work (NCSWDM, 1953). The NCSWDM encouraged schools of social work to develop recruitment campaigns (NCSWDM, 1952). The CSWE January 27, 1954 meeting minutes read, “There has been a marked upgrading of qualifications due to an increased supply of draft eligible graduate social workers” (CSWE, 1954, p. 1). The minutes detail the shortage that occurred during the outbreaks of hostilities in Korea and how through the NCSWDM collaborative efforts there was an increased number of individuals seeking social work positions.

The NCSWDM’s dedicated focus on recruitment coincided with increased recruitment campaigns by the Council on Social Work Education and the National Social Welfare Assembly. In 1952, the National Social Welfare Assembly coordinated a meeting to establish a division of responsibility and develop a coordinated effort to increase the efficiency of efforts (NSWA, 1952). The NCSWDM continued to take a leadership role as the central service for handling social work inquiries, coordinating recruitment campaigns, and for providing recruitment materials across the nation.

Advocacy with Selective Service

The NCSWDM worked closely with the selective service dealing with policy issues, as well as working one on one with direct issues facing students and service members seeking

social work positions. Table 3 presents the most common advocacy with Selected Service themes represented in the data.

Table 3

Codes for the Most Common Themes to Advocacy with Selective Service.

Coded Theme	Number	Percentage
NCSWDM Advocacy with Selective Service	77	65
Optimal Personnel Usage	41	35

The number column indicates the number of times the coded theme is represented in the data and each percentage outlines the amount of data connected to that theme. The data analysis related to advocacy with selective service accounted for 18% of the categorical themes identified and demonstrates the ongoing advocacy of the NCSWDM with the Selective Service.

The NCSWDM was hopeful that their advocacy efforts would reduce the number of educational interruptions for social work students so that they could complete school and help alleviate the shortage of social workers in the Army (NCSWDM, 1952). The NCSWDM (1952) described specific examples of “individual hardships and cases of improper classification and assignment” where the committee was instrumental in resolving issues and “positively affecting classification and assignment procedures” (p. 2). In the final letter to the NASW on June 7, 1955, the NCSWDM described the valuable collaboration experienced over the years between the NCSWDM and the Selective Service Branch. The letter detailed the following:

Quite frequently committee assistance has been sought by social workers drafted into the armed forces that were assigned to nonprofessional duties. The NCSWDM has consistently called such cases to the attention of appropriate military authorities, most often with good results, thus promoting both good manpower utilization and professional interests. (NCSWDM, 1955, p. 4)

The data addressing the collaboration between the NCSWDM and the Selective Service demonstrated improved utilization of social workers in defense contexts.

Interprofessional Collaboration between Military and Civilian Entities

The data analysis connected to interprofessional collaboration accounted for 23% of the categorical themes. This is the second largest category and suggests the value the NCSWDM placed on interdisciplinary collaboration. Table 4 presents the most common interprofessional collaboration themes represented in the data. The number column indicates the number of times the coded theme is represented in the data and each percentage outlines the amount of data connected to that theme.

Table 4

Codes for the Most Common Interprofessional Collaboration Themes

Coded Theme	Number	Percentage
Interdisciplinary Consultation and Collaboration	56	39
Communicating Needs	34	23
Developing Relationships	29	20
The Value of Social Workers	26	18

The NCSWDM utilized resources from various entities to accomplish a common goal and became a central connecting point for professional membership associations, graduate schools of social work, the Council on Social Work Education, and national social welfare agencies (NCSWDM, 1955). The NCSWDM reviewed activities of the connected agencies to discover gaps, exchange information, and plan strategies for recruitment (NCSWDM, 1954). The NCSWDM's Statement of Program (1953) stated, "In developing our relationships with the Department of Defense, the Army, Navy and Air Force, we are constantly alert to opportunities to increase our usefulness" (NCSWDM, 1953, p. 4). There is substantial discourse that detailed the collaborative efforts of all the agencies and organizations involved with the NCSWDM.

The NCSWDM maintained a relationship between social welfare and the various private and public agencies related to national defense efforts. The interdisciplinary efforts included the Army, Navy, Airforce, Department of Defense, Federal Civil Defense Administration, National Social Welfare Assembly, National Office of Selective Service, Education and Welfare, Department of Health, The American Social Hygiene Association, the United Services Organization, the United Community Defense Services, and graduate schools of social work (NCSWDM, 1955). The NCSWDM emphasized the importance of “information getting and giving – information, while available through many sources, is quickly outdated” (NCSWDM, 1955, p. 2). During the NCSWDM’s tenure, information collected was prepared and distributed via general releases and reports. In a NCSWDM memo to deans of social work the committee reported, “NCSWDM has served as a channel of information specific problems referred by individual social workers, social agencies, and institutions on the one hand various official agencies and offices related to the defense establishments on the other” (NCSWDM, 1955, p. 1). The NCSWDM’s ability to quickly disseminate information contributed to the success of the collaboration.

Addressing the Inherent Strains between Civilian and Military Structures

The NCSWDM was transparent about the inherent strains that existed between the civilian and military structures. This categorical theme of addressing the inherent strains accounts for 16% of the categories identified. Table 5 presents the most common themes addressing the inherent strains between civilian and military structures represented in the data.

Table 5

Codes for the Most Common Themes to Recognizing the Inherent Strains.

Coded Theme	Number	Percentage
Developing a Common Understanding	41	39
Respect and Sensitivity	28	27
Collaboration	36	34

The number column indicates the number of times the coded theme is represented in the data and each percentage outlines the amount of data connected to that theme. In a 1952 NCSWD meeting with the UCDS, the minutes read,

The military community itself, with which the committee has a special concern, gave minimal recognition to the values of professional social services and one of the major challenges to the committee in its program is to examine this particular situation.

(NCSWDM, 1952, p. 1)

The NCSWDM worked to find solutions regarding the inherent strains that existed between civilian and military structures. Elizabeth Wickenden, a consultant to the NCSWDM on March 17, 1955, wrote, “People in the military world tend to be as ignorant of this social welfare structure as most social workers are about the military structure” (Wickenden, 1955, p. 2).

Another document entitled *The Draft of Military Needs and Welfare Services* (1955) conferred that the goal was to establish a two-way understanding between the military and social welfare (NCSWDM, 1955). The NCSWDM understood the vast differences between the civilian and military structures and recognized the value of talking about them openly and developing a common understanding (NCSWDM, 1953).

Wickenden (1955) described the value differences between how an individual is viewed in the military as compared to civilian contexts. She explained that in civilian welfare programs

the individual is the focus of attention; as compared to military welfare programs where the focus of attention is on the social obligation to the common effort. Recognizing and understanding differences with respect and sensitivity became an effective strategy for the NCSWDM. Through collaboration the NCSWDM sought to “assure such an inter-meshing of social measures under both civilian and military auspices in order to provide for the need in the most efficient manner” (NCSWDM, 1952, p. 2). The committee served as a liaison between civilian and military organizations and developed strong working relationships to increase social work presence in the field.

Succession of the NCSWDM to the NASW and CSWE

The data analysis connected to succession of the NCSWDM to the NASW and CSWE accounted for 14% of the categorical themes. This is a significant number considering the succession plan is only addressed in the last two years of data (1954-1955). The data suggests the committee placed a priority on a successful succession plan. Table 6 presents the most common themes addressing the succession of the NCSWDM represented in the data. The number column indicates the number of times the coded theme is represented in the data and each percentage outlines the amount of data connected to that theme. The themes indicate the value that the NCSWDM placed on roles and responsibilities and interdisciplinary collaboration in their succession plan and beyond.

Table 6

Codes for the Most Common Themes to Succession of the NCSWDM.

Coded Theme	Number	Percentage
Roles and Responsibilities	50	56
Interdisciplinary Collaboration	39	44

The final letter of the NCSWDM to the NASW on June 7, 1955 addressed the primary concerns of the committee. The letter outlined the role of the social work profession in national defense, the development of social welfare services in defense-affected contexts, the utilization of manpower, and social work recruitment (NCSWDM, 1955). The letter explained, “The areas of responsibility encompassed by the NCSWDM are and should be a continuing concern of the social work profession and the NASW” (NCSWDM, 1955, p. 1). The letter described how the NASW will assign the Commission of Personnel Standards and Practices the responsibility to carry out activities that were formerly the responsibility of the NCSWDM. Moreover, the Commission will continue to develop and advocate the social work role in military and civil defense programs, and the NASW will accept full responsibility of the NCSWDM’s mission moving forward (NCSWDM, 1955).

The NCSWDM provided detailed documentation establishing how the committee activities would be carried out after their termination of services. They informed the various entities they served that “all functions which this committee has carried in relation to the national military program and civil defense, as well as those in recruitment for the field of social work, will be carried forward without interruption” (NCSWDM, 1955, p. 2). The committee was articulate outlining various roles and responsibilities, the support and funding sources, and what entities were responsible for their continued work and collaboration. In the final letter of the NCSWDM to the Executive Director of United Community Defense Services (NCSWDM, 1955) on September 28, 1955, the committee thanked the UCDS for their support, acknowledged that the newly formed NASW will assume responsibility of the NCSWDM programs, and the CSWE will accept responsibility for the recruitment program. Until the end of their tenure, the NCSWDM worked tenuously to ensure a coordinated succession of services.

Discussion

The data reflecting contributions of the NCSWDM demonstrate a comprehensive collaborative effort that existed during the committee's short tenure from 1950 through 1955. The NCSWDM acted as a central clearing house that engaged military and civilian individuals, agencies, organizations, and government structures to improve social welfare within defense-affected contexts. The categorical themes identified through the analysis demonstrate the priority placed on recruitment, advocacy, and interprofessional collaboration, while acknowledging differences and providing for a succession plan. The NCSWDM data provides a valuable documented history of CSWE and NASW contributions related to interdisciplinary practice and military social work. Moreover, the data presents information depicting the origins of the NASW and provides some context related to the era in which the organization was established.

Discussion Related to Themes and Parallels to Modern Contexts

Social work education and recruitment. The NCSWDM was established at a time when there was a shortage of military social workers and an increased need in defense-affected communities for social work services. This is similar to the present need for social workers that prompted the NASW and CSWE to establish standards for military social work (CSWE, 2010, NASW, 2012). The recognition by the NCSWDM that the social work profession possesses knowledge and skills that are valuable related to defense-affected communities aligns with the CSWE's (2010) recognition that social work is a healing profession for veterans and military members (CSWE, 2010). Additionally, the NCSWDM's commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration at all system levels related to education and recruitment is congruent with current social work practice that recognizes the value of interdisciplinary collaboration to increase practice efficacy (CSWE, 2015).

Advocacy with selective service. The data outlining the collaboration between the NCSWDM and the Selective Service demonstrate the historic issues related to the draft and the placement of social workers in military career fields. The NCSWDM was instrumental advocating with Selective Service to assign social workers into the appropriate career path. They were also successful in promoting change in the deferment process so that MSW students could postpone entering the military until after graduation. The results identify an interesting future study that could consider the draft related to social workers with pacifist leanings or the relationship between social work and the military systems during the era there is limited scholarship (1955-2000). The NCSWDM's commitment to advocacy at micro, mezzo, and macro levels provides a powerful historical example of social work's long history of affecting change with individuals, families, groups, and communities.

Interprofessional Collaboration. The NCSWDM collaborated with multiple organizations and agencies that represented diverse civilian and military entities. Similar to current social work practice, they recognized the value of relationships and communication and understood that knowledge was continually evolving. The NCSWDM was able to act as the central point of contact related to military social work and efficiently disseminate information in a timely manner. The NCSWDM provides a rich example of interprofessional collaboration in historical contexts. As defined in the literature, they were successful in effective collaborative practice that resulted in improved outcomes (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Delunas & Rouse, 2014).

Addressing the inherent strains. The NCSWDM navigated the inherent strains and cultural differences between military and civilian communities openly. They recognized that communicating information with respect, honesty, and sensitivity provided a foundation to

collaborate toward common goals despite inherent differences between culture and norms. The NCSWDM was able to leverage their role as a liaison to unify efforts among the diverse agencies and organizations that were involved. There are similarities in modern military social work practice efforts that recognize complex contexts; however, there is not one current central point of contact such as was evidenced through the work of the NCSWDM.

NCSWDM succession plan. The NCSWDM provided a detailed plan with their succession that outlined how their work would continue once the committee disbanded. The data reflects a priority placed on a concise succession distributing the committee's work to the newly formed NASW and CSWE. In the succession plan, the NCSWDM articulated the value of each of their goals including the overall importance of social workers in defense-affected communities. Further study examining the early work of the NASW and CSWE would add to our understanding of the era after the NCSWDM disbanded related to their succession plan.

Study Strengths and Limitations

The NCSWDM provides a historical example of interprofessional practice efforts to improve social work services to defense-affected communities. The data analysis of this study utilized a robust process to analyze the information and understand connections. This study provides important historical data about the NCSWDM that is not reflected in the literature. As with all historical data, this study is limited to this researcher's interpretation about what is important in the data. In addition, the data is limited to five years of information and is not meant to be exhaustive.

Implications for Practice, Education, and Future Research

The NCSWDM provides a rich example of interprofessional practice. The committee connects diverse civilian and military entities in a unified effort to increase the number of

military social workers and military practice efforts. There are implications for social work practice considering the work of the NCSWDM as a historical interprofessional practice example and the limited related scholarship. The NCSWDM provides an example of interprofessional teamwork for educators teaching social work students about the historical work of the NCSWDM and parallels for modern practice contexts. Courtenay, Nancarrow, and Dawson (2013) outline how active efforts that fosters good communication with a clear definition of roles promote effective interprofessional teams.

Future research studies analyzing the NCSWDM's succession plan and how it was carried out by the NASW and CSWE after the committee disbanded would provide insight about the historical roots of military social work efforts beyond the NCSWDM. The gap in literature related to military social work between 1955 and 2000 is another compelling area of interest for inquiry exploring the reasons why research is limited during this timeframe.

Conclusion

The ramification of the longest US military engagement in history has created a plethora of needs among service members, veterans, and communities. As social workers within the profession respond to the escalating issues, the historical work of the NCSWDM provides a rich example of strength-based collaboration and practice. The NCSWDM engaged diverse entities and navigated inherent strains between military and social work cultures remaining consistent to their shared goal of improved outcomes for service members, their families, and communities. Similarly, current social work practice in military contexts requires diligent efforts to remain focused on the shared goal of improved outcomes for service members navigating differences and seeking solutions collaboratively.

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Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work

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Abstract

This interactive workshop entitled “Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work” was presented at the 63rd Annual Program Meeting for the Council on Social Work Education, October 19 – 22, 2017 in Dallas, Texas. This presentation demonstrated how the social work profession could strengthen practice competencies by aligning with established DoD resilience initiatives that are congruent with social work values and perspectives. The Air Force Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) philosophy and initiative was compared with military social work practice competencies through the framework of interprofessional and ecological perspectives. The social work profession has recognized the heightened needs of military and veteran communities by creating a framework for a comprehensive and meaningful response to the overarching issues. Therefore, collaborating with established strength-based, holistic resilience military initiatives such as CAF increases the efficacy of social work efforts “as a pivotal healing profession in the midst of wartime and in the aftermath” (CSWE, 2010, p. 2). Leveraging resources that foster resilience attending to cultural sensitivity and to the complexity of needs present in military environments has positive implications for promoting advanced military social work. The connection between the military resilience initiatives and military social work practice competencies is an important foundation and bridge for social workers engaging in complex military contexts.

Keywords: military social work, Air Force, airman, resilience, comprehensive airman fitness, CAF, interprofessional

Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work

This conference presentation entitled “Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience in Military Social Work” was presented as an interactive workshop at the 63rd Annual Program Meeting for the Council on Social Work Education, October 19 – 22, 2017 in Dallas, Texas. The workshop conceptualized interprofessional practice through the integration of Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) and the CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards. The workshop explored the congruency between CAF and social work values, perspectives, practice modalities, and skills. During the workshop, participants considered how military social workers can optimize practice efficacy by actively participating in established Department of Defense (DoD) resilience initiatives such as CAF as well as how military systems can enhance resilience efforts by utilizing the knowledge and experience of social workers.

The majority of participants attending the workshop were social work practitioners and educators interested in gaining more knowledge about military social work. There were a couple participants with significant experience working in military contexts as both military members and social workers. The diversity of background knowledge about military social work provided an excellent opportunity for engaged discussion and exploration. Complimentary themes between CAF and social work were examined considering the implications for social work practice, education, and research.

The following presentation slides one through 19 provide an overview of the interactive workshop and highlight content that was utilized to encourage discussion. Slides one through three provide an introduction, the workshop objectives, and the conceptual framework of interprofessional practice. Slide four outlines the background of military conflict with the War on Terror highlighting the increasing needs of military members.

Slides five and six explore social work's response to the needs established the CSWE and NASW military practice standards as well as schools of social work in establishing military concentrations and scholarship. Also explored is the military's response to the need with the creation of resilience initiatives such as Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF), suicide prevention programs, and new mental health positions. Slides seven through nine explain the tenets of CAF, foundational resilience skills, as well as the basic skills that align with the four domains of spiritual, physical, mental and social wellness. Slides 10 provides an opportunity for workshop participants to consider the connection through discussion at their table between CAF, the CSWE military practice standards, and social work skills, modalities, and practice perspectives. Slide 11 presents the complimentary themes between CAF and the CSWE military practice standards.

Slides 12, 13, and 14 highlight the complimentary themes of holistic practice based on prevention, resilience and strength-based skills, and critical thinking skills. Slides 15 and 16 outline the complimentary themes that include an integrated framework and research informed practice, assessment, and evaluation. Slide 17 provides an example of how the Air National Guard utilizes social workers across the country to mobilize the resilience curriculum with service members. A specific example is provided from the 144th Fighter Wing in California. Slide 18 provides the opportunity for participants to explore at their table collaborative strategies to foster resilience and efficacy for military members considering the collaborative efforts of social workers and resilience initiatives such as CAF. Slide 19 concludes the workshop with a list of resources that promote resilience and provide support to service members. Participants were provided a handout with the list of references.

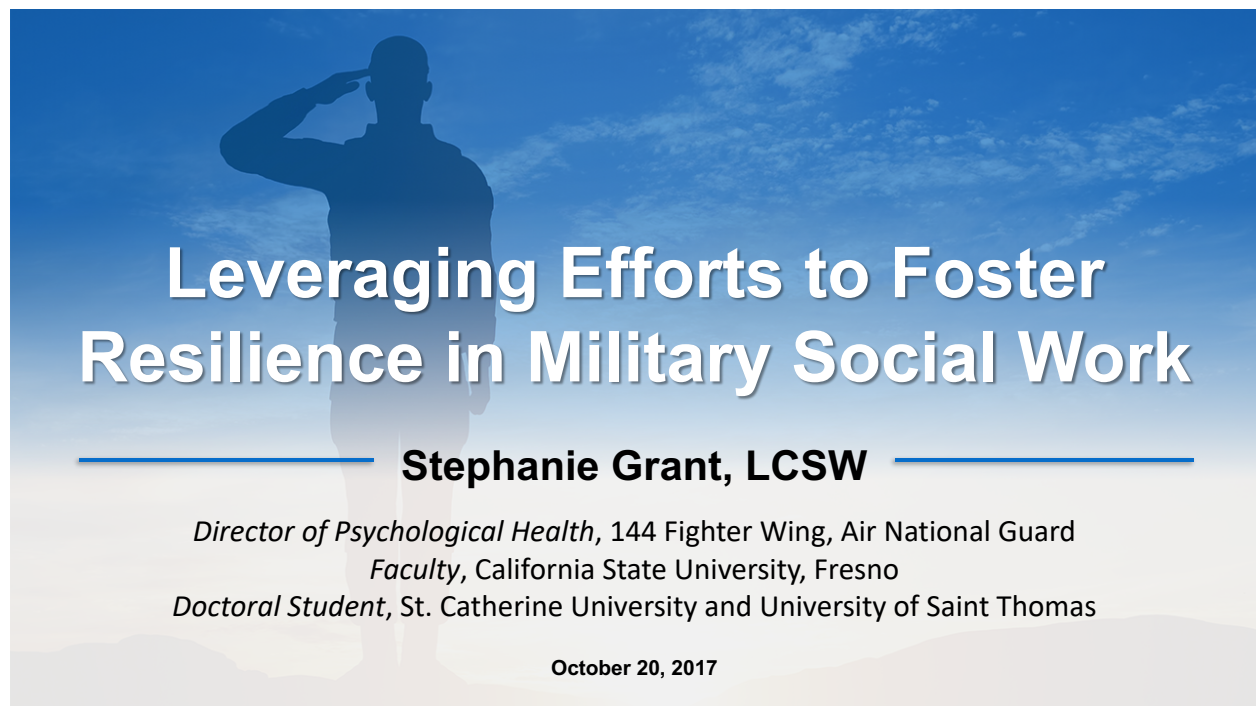


Figure 1. Presentation slide one.



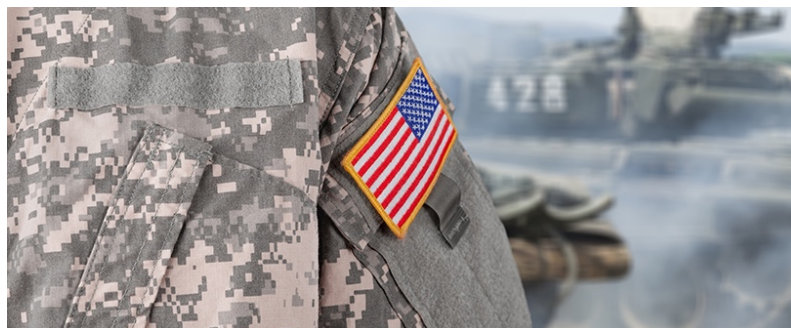
Figure 2. Presentation slide two.



Figure 3. Presentation slide three.

Background

- War on Terror - longest ongoing engagement in US history
- Increased Operational Tempo of all-volunteer force
- Since September 11, 2001 over two million service members deployed
- Escalated issues



- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Suicide and suicide ideation
- Family distress

Figure 4. Presentation slide four.

Social Work's Response to the Need

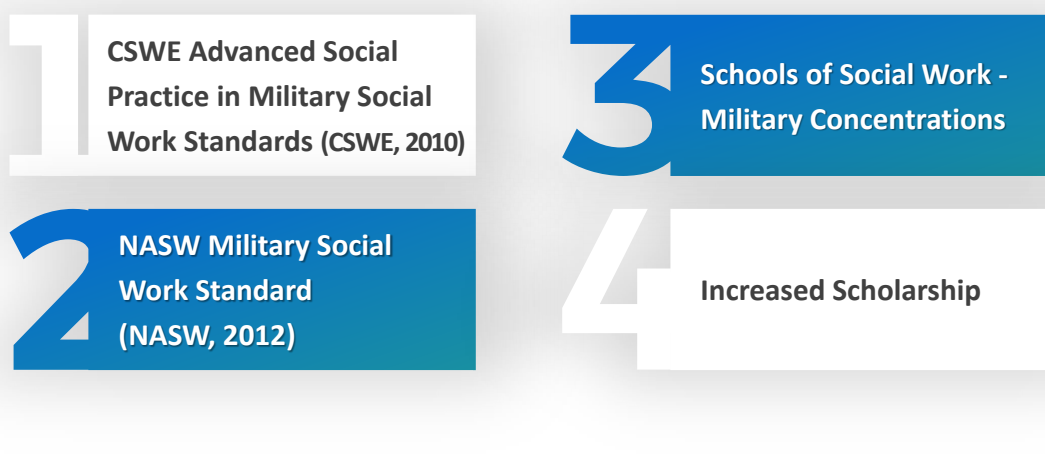


Figure 5. Presentation slide five.

The Military's Response to the Needs

- New Behavioral Health Positions across the country (DoD, VA)
- Suicide Prevention Initiatives
 - The Air Force Suicide Prevention Program is an evidenced based practice
- Resilience/Prevention Focused Initiatives
 - Comprehensive Soldier Fitness
 - Comprehensive Airman Fitness
 - Real Warriors Campaign

Can you name any others that you are aware of?

Figure 6. Presentation slide six.



Comprehensive Airman Fitness, Air Force

- CAF is based on biopsychosocial model of human emotion
- Positive Psychology
- Incorporates integrated response to foster health and wellness
- Four Domains – Mental, Social, Physical, Spiritual
- Holistic Strategies
- Peer-to-peer education and training
- Self-help and self-referral



Figure 7. Presentation slide seven.

CAF – Foundational Resilience Skills



Figure 8. Presentation slide eight.

CAF – Four Domains – Basic Skills



Figure 9. Presentation slide nine.

Take Time at Your Table

Consider the connections between the CAF Skills and Social Work Practice



Figure 10. Presentation slide 10.


Complementary Themes



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Figure 11 Presentation slide 11.

Holistic Practice Focused on Prevention



Comprehensive Airman Fitness - CAF

- Build and sustain resilience in military environments
- Recognize dimensional aspects of whole person (mental, physical, social and spiritual)
- Person-in-environment
- Holistic practice and reciprocity
- Early help-seeking, mitigate stigma




CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards

- Promote wellness, health, and resilience for all individuals within multi-system environment
- Recognize and assess member's resilient traits and their ability to adapt to stressors
- Consider person within their environment (P-I-E)
- Engage in holistic, prevention practice strategies
- Understand the transactional nature of individuals within community contexts


Figure 12. Presentation slide 12.

Resilience and Strength-based Skills



Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF)

- Promote overall fitness and performance through skills training and education
- Foster foundational life skills and competencies
- Foster a balanced and healthy lifestyle




CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards

- Promote client self-efficacy
- Recognize and value strengths
- Foster client well-being and resilience


Figure 13. Presentation slide 13.

Critical Thinking Skills



Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF)

- Adjust and adapt to complex environmental demands
- Continued evaluation of wellness in the four CAF domains (Physical, Mental, Social, and Spiritual)



CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards

- Critical thinking is a foundational practice and value
- Utilizing appropriate assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation models

Figure 14. Presentation slide 14.

Integrated Framework

**Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF)**


- Integrated structure utilizing cross functioning training and education strategies
- Teaches resilience skills to individuals, families, groups, and community systems
- Values the relationship between the individual and the four domains of physical, spiritual, mental, and social health

**CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards**


- Utilizes social work principles to guide professional practice congruent with CAF tenets
- Service delivery at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- Person-in-environment, ecological perspective

Figure 15. Presentation slide 15.

Research Informed Practice, Assessment, and Evaluation

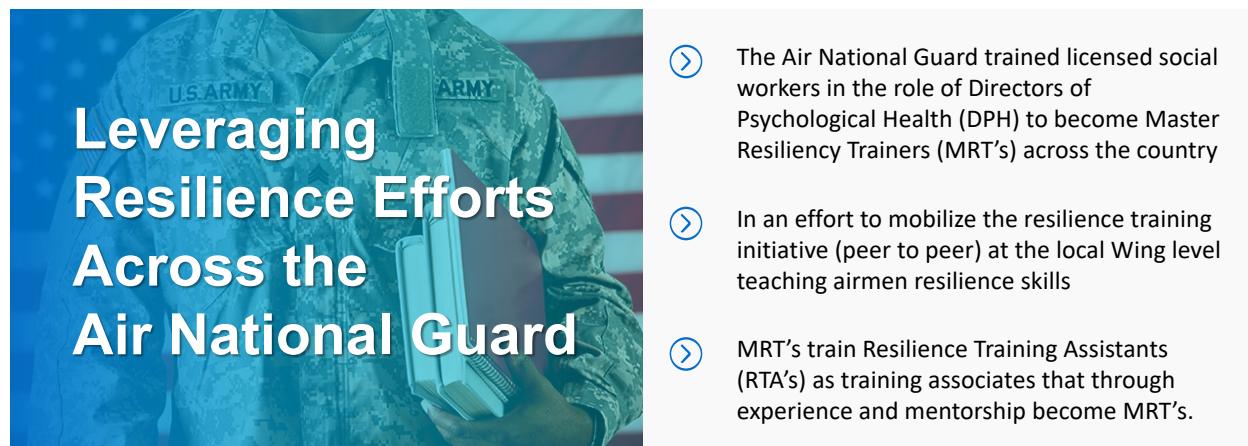
**Comprehensive Airman Fitness**

- Utilizes research informed practice strategies
- Provides tools for leaders to create and sustain a comprehensive fitness and optimize performance at work, home and in the community

**CSWE Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work Standards**

- Advocates for research informed practice that sustains ongoing analysis of assessment, prevention, and evaluation models
- Modalities should be consistent with multisystem approaches congruent with the diversity of systems

Figure 16. Presentation slide 16.



Leveraging Resilience Efforts Across the Air National Guard

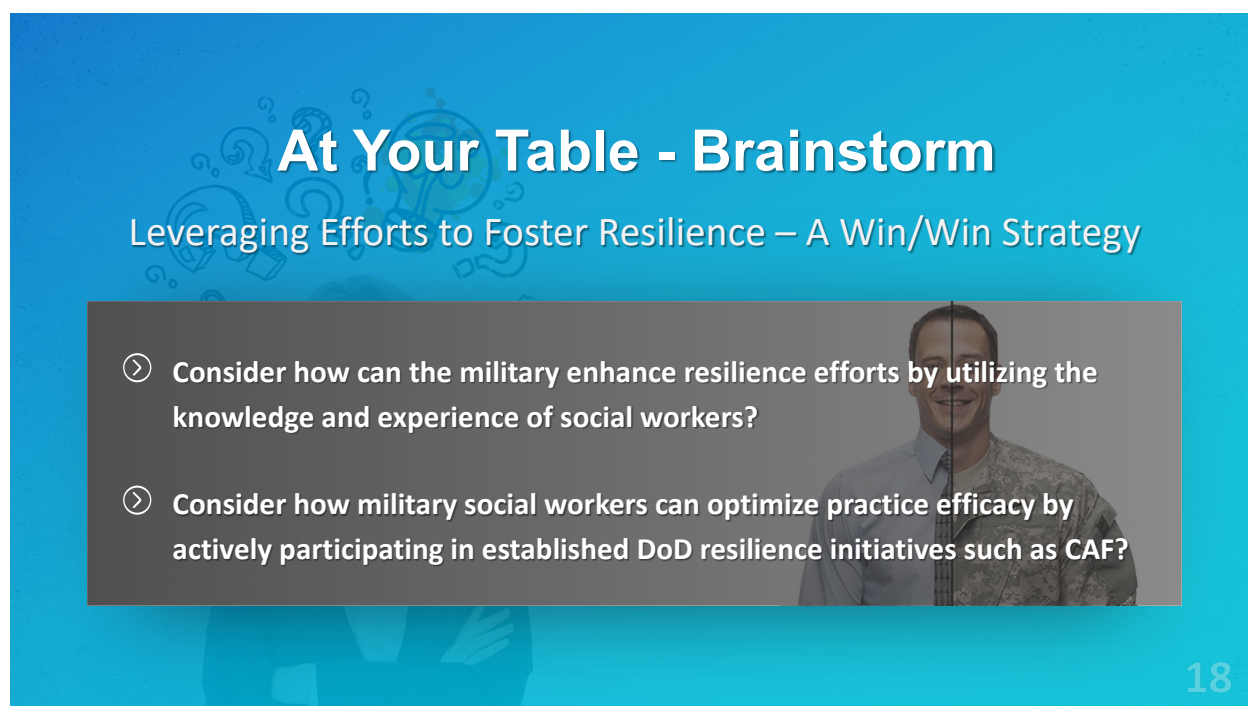
- The Air National Guard trained licensed social workers in the role of Directors of Psychological Health (DPH) to become Master Resiliency Trainers (MRT's) across the country
- In an effort to mobilize the resilience training initiative (peer to peer) at the local Wing level teaching airmen resilience skills
- MRT's train Resilience Training Assistants (RTA's) as training associates that through experience and mentorship become MRT's.

February, 2017 – 144 FW Collaboration with Army Example

The Army MRT and the ANG MRT (myself) trained 25 soldiers and 15 airmen to become RTA's at the 144 FW in an effort to facilitate peer-to-peer mentors that foster resilience among their fellow service members

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Figure 17. Presentation slide 17.



At Your Table - Brainstorm

Leveraging Efforts to Foster Resilience – A Win/Win Strategy

- Consider how can the military enhance resilience efforts by utilizing the knowledge and experience of social workers?
- Consider how military social workers can optimize practice efficacy by actively participating in established DoD resilience initiatives such as CAF?

Figure 18. Presentation slide 18.

Resources

- After Deployment: <http://afterdeployment.dcoe.mil>
- Military OneSource: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>
- Moving Forward: veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward
- Real Warriors: <http://www.realwarriors.net>
- Wingman Online: <http://wingmanonline.org>
- Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program: <http://www.yellowribbon.mil>

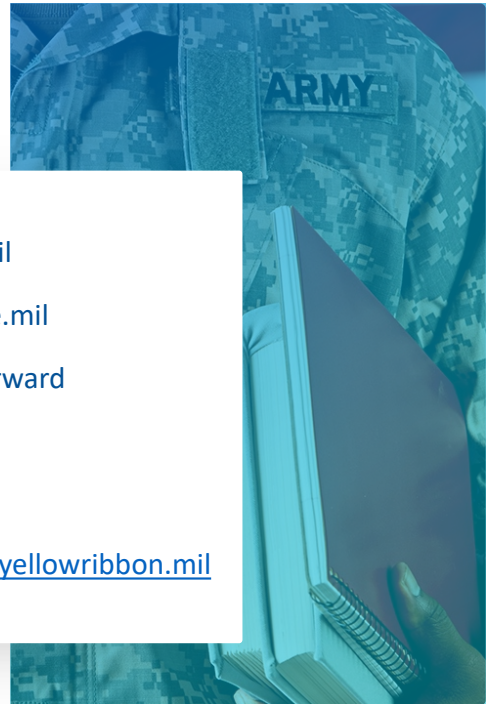


Figure 19. Presentation slide 19.

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